

Serial No.: 10/717,630
Atty. Docket No.: P68978US0

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 6, please amend the first full paragraph, beginning on line 5, as follows:

--The air introduced into the slurry line leading to the dryer immediately after the exit from the water tank is at a very high velocity. It has been found that ~~an air volume a flow rate~~ of 100 cubic meters (m^3)/hour through a valve at a pressure of 8 bar and into a slurry 1.5 inch pipe line produces the requisite air velocity for the present invention. The volume of air introduced into the exiting water and pellet slurry produces an overall gas/slurry mixture in the nature of a mist and is likely to have a gas component of 98% - 99% or more by volume of the overall mixture. The air injection into the slurry line dramatically increases the speed of the pellet flow from the water box to the exit of the dryer to a rate less than one second. While air is the preferred gas in view of its inert nature and ready availability, other inert gases such as nitrogen or similar gases could be used.--

On page 11, please amend the last paragraph, beginning on line 16, as follows:

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--The air is conveniently injected into the slurry line 30 at point 70 using a conventional compressed air line typically available in most manufacturing facilities, such as with a pneumatic compressor, and a standard ball valve sufficient to produce a high velocity air flow in the slurry line 30. This is readily achieved by a ~~volume of air~~ flow rate in the range of 100 m³/hour through a standard ball valve at a pressure of 8 bar into a slurry line comprising a standard 1.5 inch pipe. This high velocity air (or other gas) when contacting the water and hot pellets generates a water vapor mist. The pellets tend to disperse to the inside circumference of the pipe as they move rapidly therethrough to the dryer. It is estimated that the volume of air in the overall gas/slurry mixture is on the order of 98% - 99% or more by volume of the overall mixture. The air injected into the slurry line 30 at point 70 increases the speed of the pellet flow from the water box 16 to the exit 34 of the dryer 32 to a rate of less than one second.--